



*European Economic and Social Committee*

**SOC/136**  
**DAPHNE II programme**

Brussels, 14 May 2003

## **OPINION**

of the European Economic and Social Committee  
on the

**Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing  
a second phase of a programme of Community action (2004-2008)  
to prevent violence against children, young people and women and  
to protect victims and groups at risk (the DAPHNE II programme)**

COM(2003) 54 final

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ADMINISTRATOR: A. HICK

On 4 March 2003, the Council decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 262 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the

*Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a second phase of a programme of Community action (2004-2008) to prevent violence against children, young people and women and to protect victims and groups at-risk (the DAPHNE II programme)*

COM(2003) 54 final – 2003/0025(COD).

The Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 2 April 2003. The rapporteur was **Mrs Davison**.

At its 399<sup>th</sup> plenary session (meeting of 14 May 2003), the European Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 118 votes in favour and two votes against, with six abstentions:

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Commission is proposing to renew and revise the Daphne programme in order to prevent and combat all forms of violence against children, young people and women by taking preventive measures and by providing support for victims. It will promote transnational actions involving multidisciplinary networks, exchange of information, awareness-raising and research. The Commission also proposes setting aside 15% of the budget for complementary actions on its own initiative such as studies, the formulation of indicators, data gathering and seminars. The new member states will be included. The EEA countries, Romania Bulgaria and Turkey are associated. In view of enlargement and the fact that just under a half of the good projects submitted are funded, a budget increase to approximately €40 million is envisaged.

1.2 The Committee welcomes renewal of the programme which it has supported in the past. The EESC attaches great importance to the human rights of children and women as indicated by its past body of work including opinions on:

- Programme of Community action (the DAPHNE Programme) (2000-2004) on measures aimed to prevent violence against children, young persons and women<sup>1</sup>
- Exploitation of children and sex tourism<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> EESC opinion, OJ C/169, 16.6.1999

<sup>2</sup> EESC opinion, OJ C 284, 14.9.1998

- Multiannual Community action plan on promoting safer use of the Internet by combating illegal and harmful content on global networks<sup>3</sup>
- Programme for child protection on the Internet<sup>4</sup>
- Fourth World Conference on Women<sup>5</sup>
- A new impetus for European youth<sup>6</sup>
- European cultural policy for children<sup>7</sup>.

1.3 Awareness-raising and dissemination are very important in this area. The Daphne programme is valuable in this respect because of its large multiplying effect throughout Europe. The Committee would stress that violence against children and women is not just a question of health and physical preservation, as suggested by the Commission document but also infringement of their human rights. It is therefore a matter of common responsibility. In some of the above opinions, the EESC has repeated its request that children's rights be mentioned in the Treaty.

1.4 In terms of promoting the development and exchange of good practice, the resources available in recent years through programmes such as Daphne and STOP have generated a wide range of innovative projects, activities, and studies by NGOs, state authorities, and research bodies. The popularity of these programmes is shown by the fact that the number of applications has regularly outstripped the available funding. The Daphne Initiative has generally been able to fund one project for every seven proposals received. The EESC would question therefore whether the increased funding is sufficient. In addition, although the population of the new member states may be smaller than that of the existing EU, some of the problems - that could be addressed by Daphne - are greater.

1.5 For that reason, the EESC particularly welcomes Daphne's extension to the CEEs and hopes they will be able to respond quickly enough to participate. It will use its network of Joint Consultative Committees and other links to alert civil society in the 10 applicant countries. Awareness-raising is needed among parents, school networks and officials of the trafficking in children from these countries and among young women about the risk of being tricked into prostitution at home and abroad. Tackling demand in the country of origin as was pointed out very strongly in the outcome document of the Yokohama World Conference is also important. Innovative projects are needed to tackle the demand sector and encourage the private and public sector to stand

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<sup>3</sup> EESC opinion 1012/2002, 18.9.2002

<sup>4</sup> EESC opinion, OJ C 48, 21.2.2002

<sup>5</sup> EESC opinion, OJ C168, 16.6.2000

<sup>6</sup> EESC opinion, OJ C 149, 26.6.2002

<sup>7</sup> EESC opinion, OJ C 153, 28.5.1996

up against trafficking and to participate in awareness campaigns aimed at potential sources of demand (the armed forces, businessmen abroad, travel agents, hotels, personnel of NGOs, child service providers and embassies, lorry drivers, ...). A key strand in such projects should be integration to ensure wide dissemination through existing networks to maximise use of resources. Integration and transparency are also needed with the PHARE programme so that supply can be tackled in the three remaining candidate countries.

1.6 New information is needed about what has been achieved in the Member States. Member State reports of measures they have taken nationally to combat trafficking in women have not been matched by reports in relation to child sexual exploitation, genital mutilation or "crimes of honour". The failure of the Member States to respond may be for a range of reasons, including lack of information, of progress, or of political will. But overall it tends to suggest that considerable progress is still required to ensure effective approaches to child sexual exploitation across the EU, especially as the legal status of the child in the EU Treaty is unclear, and the inclusion of children's rights in EU legislation only ad hoc. The new proposal emphasises the need for data collection which needs to be consistent across Europe. The EESC would call on Member States to provide this, but accepts that in practice some pump-priming may be needed from Daphne. It has raised before the related problem that more data is needed on the number of children abused for on-line pornography and the number assaulted as a result of an on-line approach.

1.7 Research under the programme should consider potential legislative measures as well as awareness-raising. For example, the EESC has recommended the establishment of strong EU rules on trans-border adoption and officials and NGOs dealing with children, as well as legislation to prevent identified paedophiles travelling abroad for sex tourism, "grooming" on the Internet and a general duty on ISPs to protect children on-line.

1.8 It is important that projects link with existing networks in order to maximise dissemination, for example Departments of Education, School net, E. Europe, Lifelong Learning initiatives, Departments of Health, business, trade unions and police authorities.

1.9 Moreover, the EESC feels it is essential that the programme should encourage cross-border initiatives to highlight violence and intimidation against women, children and young people with disabilities, and measures to improve access to various forms of support for all groups of people with disabilities who suffer abuse.

1.10 The EESC welcomes the European Commission's recent decision to set up a group of experts on human trafficking, which will have to play an active part in the next stages of the campaign against human trafficking and will allow the Commission to gather views on possible initiatives in this sphere. The establishment of this group represents a key step in applying the Brussels Declaration.

1.11 Many of the problems dealt with under Daphne are criminal acts – abduction, trafficking, slavery, mutilation and "crimes of honour", abuse (on and off-line). Whilst the Daphne

programme can help, what is needed is a vigorous effort by society as a whole, including more concerted action in Europol and Interpol, and a clearer political will to eradicate this systematic violence. Breaches of trust by those in authority should be handled especially severely.

## **2. Detailed comments**

### **2.1 Scale of projects**

2.1.1 The Commission proposes reserving a share of the budget for large-scale projects up to €250,000. The EESC would agree that effective projects of this scale can use resources more efficiently. Every effort should be made to reduce the burden of paperwork on both sides. The emphasis should be on concrete deliverables and proper accounting as evidence of good project management. Clear guidelines should be provided to successful applicants on the accounting evidence required to be sure that they set up systems to cope in advance.

### **2.2 Co-financing**

2.2.1 The EESC agrees the 80% limit. As a matter of principle, it is important that project proposers can show the ability to attract some other resources. However, to reach 50% (as often is required in co-financed Commission projects) can be an obstacle for some NGOS.

### **2.3 Definition of targets and topics**

2.3.1 The EESC supports the proposal to identify, in a non-exclusive fashion, a few specific actions that are particularly needed each year. New and innovative projects should also be encouraged.

2.3.2 The Commission should make clear to applicants the criteria (including level of expertise) that will be applied in the selection process.

## 2.4 Easier access for NGOS

2.4.1 If an electronic application form is used it needs to be simple to complete and written in plain language. Payment times need to take account of NGOs' limited budgets and cashflow challenges.

Brussels, 14 May 2003.

The President  
of the  
European Economic and Social Committee

The Secretary-General  
of the  
European Economic and Social Committee

**Roger Briesch**

**Patrick Venturini**

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